

Defining Green Jobs

In recent years, public policies nationally and internationally are increasingly focused on the need to transform economic activities to be sustainable, secure, and healthier. Economic activities—production, investment, infrastructure development, and research—that promote environmental health, conserve resources, and secure our energy future have been given the label “green.”

Concepts and discussions of the green economy have been with us for many years, but attempts to understand its scope, size, and growth have been stymied by the lack of official government data on green industries, occupations, and employment. As various states, regions, and national organizations have struggled to measure the green economy in the recent past, the need for standard and comprehensive measurement of the green economy became clear.

Beginning in 2009, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) was given the assignment to develop a standard definition and procedure to measure green jobs. BLS defines green jobs as either:

- A. *Jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources.*
- B. *Jobs in which workers' duties involve making their establishment's production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources.*

**U.S. FIRMS THAT PRODUCE GREEN GOODS OR SERVICES BY INDUSTRY
2009**

	Number of Establishments	Percent Distribution
Natural Resources and Mining	88,700	4.1%
Construction	820,700	38.1%
Manufacturing	77,700	3.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	49,300	2.3%
Information	77,000	3.6%
Professional and Business Services	779,100	36.2%
Education and Health Services	26,400	1.2%
Other Services	183,300	8.5%
Government	42,100	2.0%
All Other Sectors	10,400	0.5%
Total	2,154,700	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is developing a standard definition to measure green jobs.



BLS determined it needed two approaches to measure green jobs. The output approach (Part A), identifies firms that sell green goods and services and counts the associated jobs. According to BLS, customers buy green goods and services that fall into five categories:

1. Energy from renewable sources.
2. Energy efficiency.
3. Pollution reduction and removal, greenhouse gas reduction, and recycling and reuse.
4. Natural resources conservation.
5. Environmental compliance, education and training, and public awareness.

The second method or the process approach (Part B), counts workers within firms that “research, develop, or use technologies and practices to lessen the environmental impact of their establishment”, or train others “in these technologies and practices.” BLS has identified four groups of green technologies and practices within firms for the process approach:

1. Energy from renewable sources.
2. Energy efficiency.
3. Pollution reduction and removal, green house gas reduction and recycling and reuse.
4. Natural resources conservation.

BLS will count green jobs and wages by detailed industries and occupations for the output approach

(Part A) using two surveys, a new Green Goods and Services (GGS) survey and an enhanced version of the existing Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. When a business establishment produces both green and non-green goods or services, jobs will be allocated as green using the share of total revenues from the green products sold. This allows for an equitable distribution of production, administrative, and management jobs among green and non-green products.

BLS is scheduled to publish its first green jobs statistics on national and state levels by industry and occupation from data collected during 2011 from the GGS and OES surveys in the spring 2012 and annually thereafter.

For the process approach (Part B), measuring green jobs related to the use of environmentally friendly production within an establishment, BLS is developing a special employer survey to be administered during the summer of this year with a planned release in the summer of 2012. This data will be employment and wages by occupations for the Nation and Census Regions (no state breakout).❶

*For additional information
on measuring green jobs
from BLS go to
<http://www.bls.gov/green/>*